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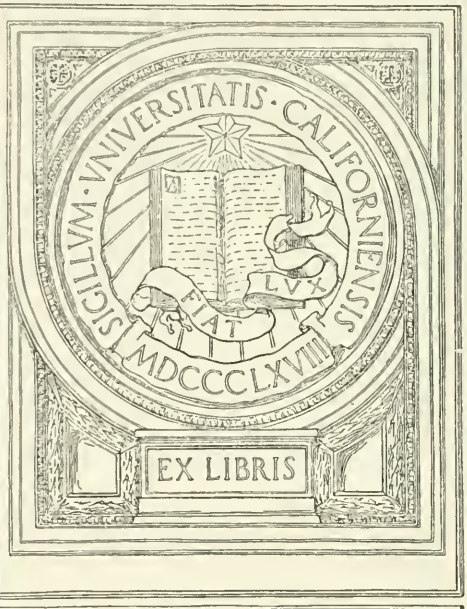

Robert Ernest Cowan

20th Congress, 2d Session. [Doc. No. 2.] Ho. of Reps. Executive.

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MESSAGE

FROM THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,

TO BOTH HOUSES OF CONGRESS,

AT THE

COMMENCEMENT OF THE SECOND SESSION

OF THE

TWENTIETH CONGRESS.

JUN 23 1937

DECEMBER 2, 1828.

Read, and committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

WASHINGTON:

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1828.

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MESSAGE.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States.

FELLOW-CITIZENS OF THE SENATE,
AND OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

IF the enjoyment in profusion of the bounties of Providence forms a suitable subject of mutual gratulation and grateful acknowledgment, we are admonished at this return of the season, when the Representatives of the nation are assembled to deliberate upon their concerns, to offer up the tribute of fervent and grateful hearts, for the never-failing mercies of Him who ruleth over all. He has again favored us with healthful seasons and abundant harvests. He has sustained us in peace with foreign countries, and in tranquillity within our borders. He has preserved us in the quiet and undisturbed possession of civil and religious liberty. He has crowned the year with his goodness, imposing on us no other conditions than of improving, for our own happiness, the blessings bestowed by his hands; and in the fruition of all his favors, of devoting the faculties with which we have been endowed by him to his glory, and to our own temporal and eternal welfare.

In the relations of our Federal Union with our brethren of the human race, the changes which have occurred since the close of your last session have generally tended to the preservation of peace, and to the cultivation of harmony. Before your last separation, a war had unhappily been kindled between the Empire of Russia, one of those with which our intercourse has been no other than a constant exchange of good offices, and that of the Ottoman Porte, a nation from which geographical distance, religious opinions, and maxims of government, on their part, little suited to the formation of those bonds of mutual benevolence which result from the benefits of commerce, had kept us in a state, perhaps too much prolonged, of coldness and alienation. The extensive, fertile, and populous dominions of the Sultan belong rather to the Asiatic, than the European division of the human family. They enter but partially into the system of Europe; nor have their wars with Russia and Austria, the European States upon which they border, for more than a century past, disturbed the pacific relations of those States with the other Great Powers of Europe. Neither France, nor Prussia, nor Great Britain has ever taken part in them; nor is it to be expected that they will at this time. The declaration of war by Russia has received the approbation or acquiescence of her allies, and we may indulge the hope that its progress and termination will be signalized by the moderation and forbearance, no less than by the energy of the Empe-

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ror Nicholas; and that it will afford the opportunity for such collateral agency in behalf of the suffering Greeks, as will secure to them ultimately the triumph of humanity and of freedom.

The state of our particular relations with France has scarcely varied in the course of the present year. The commercial intercourse between the two countries has continued to increase for the mutual benefit of both. The claims of indemnity to numbers of our fellow-citizens for depredations upon their property, heretofore committed, during the Revolutionary Governments, remain unadjusted, and still form the subject of earnest representation and remonstrance. Recent advices from the Minister of the United States at Paris encourage the expectation that the appeal to the justice of the French Government will ere long receive a favorable consideration.

The last friendly expedient has been resorted to for the decision of the controversy with Great Britain, relating to the Northeastern Boundary of the United States. By an agreement with the British Government, carrying into effect the provisions of the fifth article of the Treaty of Ghent, and the Convention of 29th September, 1827, his Majesty the King of the Netherlands has, by common consent, been selected as the umpire between the parties. The proposal to him to accept the designation for the performance of this friendly office will be made at an early day; and the United States, relying upon the justice of their cause, will cheerfully commit the arbitrament of it to a Prince equally distinguished for the independence of his spirit, his indefatigable assiduity to the duties of his station, and his inflexible personal probity.

Our commercial relations with Great Britain will deserve the serious consideration of Congress, and the exercise of a conciliatory and forbearing spirit in the policy of both Governments. The state of them has been materially changed by the act of Congress passed at their last session, in alteration of the several acts imposing duties on imports, and by acts of more recent date of the British Parliament. The effect of the interdiction of direct trade, commenced by Great Britain, and reciprocated by the United States, has been, as was to be foreseen, only to substitute different channels for an exchange of commodities indispensable to the colonies, and profitable to a numerous class of our fellow-citizens. The exports, the revenue, the navigation of the United States, have suffered no diminution by our exclusion from direct access to the British Colonies. The Colonies pay more dearly for the necessaries of life, which their Government burdens with the charges of double voyages, freight, insurance, and commission; and the profits of our exports are somewhat impaired, and more injuriously transferred from one portion of our citizens to another. The resumption of this old and otherwise exploded system of colonial exclusion, has not secured to the shipping interest of Great Britain the relief which, at the expense of the distant colonies, and of the United States, it was expected to afford. Other measures have been resorted to, more pointedly bearing upon the navigation of the United States, and which, unless modified by the construction given to the recent Acts of Parliament, will be manifestly incompatible with the positive stipulations of the commercial convention existing between the two countries. That convention, however, may be terminated, with twelve month's notice, at the option of either party.

A treaty of Amity, Navigation, and Commerce, between the United

States and his Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary and Bohemia, has been prepared for signature by the Secretary of State, and by the Baron de Lederer, intrusted with full powers of the Austrian Government. Independently of the new and friendly relations which may be thus commenced with one of the most eminent and powerful nations of the earth, the occasion has been taken in it, as in other recent Treaties concluded by the United States, to extend those principles of liberal intercourse and of fair reciprocity which intertwine with the exchanges of commerce the principles of justice, and the feelings of mutual benevolence. This system, first proclaimed to the world in the first commercial Treaty ever concluded by the United States, that of 6th February, 1778, with France, has been invariably the cherished policy of our Union. It is by treaties of commerce alone that it can be made ultimately to prevail as the established system of all civilized nations. With this principle, our fathers extended the hand of friendship to every nation of the globe, and to this policy our country has ever since adhered—whatever of regulation in our laws has ever been adopted unfavorable to the interest of any foreign nation, has been essentially defensive and counteracting to similar regulations of theirs operating against us.

Immediately after the close of the war of Independence, Commissioners were appointed by the Congress of the Confederation, authorized to conclude treaties with every nation of Europe disposed to adopt them. Before the wars of the French revolution, such treaties had been consummated with the United Netherlands, Sweden, and Prussia. During those wars, treaties with Great Britain and Spain had been effected, and those with Prussia and France renewed. In all these, some concessions to the liberal principles of intercourse proposed by the United States had been obtained; but as, in all the negotiations, they came occasionally in collision with previous internal regulations, or exclusive and excluding compacts of monopoly, with which the other parties had been trammelled, the advances made in them towards the freedom of trade were partial and imperfect. Colonial establishments, chartered companies, and ship-building influence, pervaded and encumbered the legislation of all the great commercial States; and the United States, in offering free trade and equal privilege to all, were compelled to acquiesce in many exceptions with each of the parties to their treaties, accommodated to their existing laws and anterior engagements.

The colonial system, by which this whole hemisphere was bound, has fallen into ruins. Totally abolished by revolutions, converting colonies into independent nations, throughout the two American Continents, excepting a portion of territory chiefly at the northern extremity of our own, and confined to the remnants of dominion retained by Great Britain over the insular Archipelago, geographically the appendages of our part of the globe. With all the rest we have free trade—even with the insular Colonies of all the European nations, except Great Britain. Her Government also had manifested approaches to the adoption of a free and liberal intercourse between her colonies and other nations, though, by a sudden and scarcely explained revulsion, the spirit of exclusion has been revived for operation upon the United States alone.

The conclusion of our last Treaty of Peace with Great Britain was shortly afterwards followed by a Commercial Convention, placing the direct intercourse between the two countries upon a footing of more equal

reciprocity than had ever before been admitted. The same principle has since been much further extended by treaties with France, Sweden, Denmark, the Hanseatic Cities, Prussia in Europe, and with the Republics of Colombia, and of Central America, in this hemisphere. The mutual abolition of discriminating duties and charges, upon the navigation and commercial intercourse between the parties, is the general maxim which characterizes them all. There is reason to expect that it will, at no distant period, be adopted by other nations, both of Europe and America; and to hope, that, by its universal prevalence, one of the fruitful sources of wars of commercial competition will be extinguished.

Among the nations upon whose Governments many of our fellow-citizens have had long pending claims of indemnity for depredations upon their property during a period when the rights of neutral commerce were disregarded, was that of Denmark. They were, soon after the events occurred, the subject of a special mission from the United States, at the close of which, the assurance was given, by his Danish Majesty, that, at a period of more tranquillity, and of less distress, they would be considered, examined, and decided upon, in a spirit of determined purpose for the dispensation of justice. I have much pleasure in informing Congress that the fulfilment of this honorable promise is now in progress; that a small portion of the claims has already been settled, to the satisfaction of the claimants; and that we have reason to hope that the remainder will shortly be placed in a train of equitable adjustment. This result has always been confidently expected, from the character of personal integrity and of benevolence which the Sovereign of the Danish Dominions has, through every vicissitude of fortune, maintained.

The general aspect of the affairs of our neighboring American nations of the South, has been rather of approaching than of settled tranquillity. Internal disturbances have been more frequent among them than their common friends would have desired. Our intercourse with all has continued to be that of friendship, and of mutual good will. Treaties of Commerce and of Boundaries with the United Mexican States have been negotiated, but, from various successive obstacles, not yet brought to a final conclusion. The civil war, which unfortunately still prevails in the Republics of Central America, has been unpropitious to the cultivation of our commercial relations with them; and the dissentions and revolutionary changes in the Republics of Colombia and of Peru, have been seen with cordial regret by us, who would gladly contribute to the happiness of both. It is with great satisfaction, however, that we have witnessed the recent conclusion of a peace between the Governments of Buenos Ayres and of Brazil; and it is equally gratifying to observe that indemnity has been obtained for some of the injuries which our fellow-citizens had sustained in the latter of those countries. The rest are in a train of negotiation, which we hope may terminate to mutual satisfaction, and that it may be succeeded by a Treaty of Commerce and Navigation upon liberal principles, propitious to a great and growing commerce, already important to the interests of our country.

The condition and prospects of the revenue are more favorable than our most sanguine expectations had anticipated. The balance in the Treasury, on the first of January last, exclusive of the moneys received under the Convention of 13th November, 1826, with Great Britain, was five millions eight hundred and sixty-one thousand nine hundred and seventy-

two dollars, and eighty-three cents. The receipts into the Treasury from the first of January to the 30th of September last, so far as they have been ascertained to form the basis of an estimate, amount to eighteen millions six hundred and thirty-three thousand five hundred and eighty dollars and twenty-seven cents, which, with the receipts of the present quarter, estimated at five millions four hundred and sixty-one thousand two hundred and eighty-three dollars and forty cents, form an aggregate of receipts during the year of twenty-four millions and ninety-four thousand eight hundred and sixty-three dollars and sixty-seven cents. The expenditures of the year may probably amount to twenty-five millions six hundred and thirty-seven thousand one hundred and eleven dollars and sixty-three cents; and leave in the Treasury, on the first of January next, the sum of five millions one hundred and twenty-five thousand six hundred and thirty-eight dollars, fourteen cents.

The receipts of the present year have amounted to near two millions more than was anticipated at the commencement of the last session of Congress.

The amount of duties secured on importations, from the first of January to the 30th of September, was about twenty-two millions nine hundred and ninety-seven thousand, and that of the estimated accruing revenue is five millions; forming an aggregate for the year of near twenty-eight millions. This is one million more than the estimate made last December for the accruing revenue of the present year, which, with allowances for drawbacks and contingent deficiencies, was expected to produce an actual revenue of twenty-two millions three hundred thousand dollars. Had these only been realized, the expenditures of the year would have been also proportionally reduced. For, of these twenty-four millions received, upwards of nine millions have been applied to the extinction of public debt bearing an interest of six per cent. a year, and of course reducing the burden of interest annually payable in future, by the amount of more than half a million. The payments on account of interest during the current year exceed three millions of dollars; presenting an aggregate of more than twelve millions, applied during the year to the discharge of the public debt, the whole of which remaining due on the first of January next will amount only to fifty-eight millions three hundred and sixty-two thousand one hundred and thirty-five dollars, seventy-eight cents.

That the revenue of the ensuing year will not fall short of that received in the one now expiring, there are indications which can scarcely prove deceptive. In our country, an uniform experience of forty years has shown, that, whatever the tariff of duties upon articles imported from abroad has been, the amount of importations has always borne an average value nearly approaching to that of the exports, though occasionally differing in the balance, sometimes being more, and sometimes less. It is, indeed, a general law of prosperous commerce, that the real value of exports should, by a small, and only a small balance, exceed that of imports, that balance being a permanent addition to the wealth of the nation. The extent of the prosperous commerce of the nation must be regulated by the amount of its exports; and an important addition to the value of these will draw after it a corresponding increase of importations. It has happened, in the vicissitudes of the seasons, that the harvests of all Europe have, in the late Summer and Autumn, fallen short of their usual average. A relaxation of the interdict upon the importation of grain and flour from

abroad has ensued; a propitious market has been opened to the granaries of our country; and a new prospect of reward presented to the labors of the husbandman, which, for several years, has been denied. This accession to the profits of agriculture in the middle and western portions of our Union is accidental and temporary. It may continue only for a single year. It may be, as has been often experienced in the revolutions of time, but the first of several scanty harvests in succession. We may consider it certain, that, for the approaching year, it has added an item of large amount to the value of our exports, and that it will produce a corresponding increase of importations. It may, therefore, confidently be foreseen that the revenue of 1829 will equal, and probably exceed, that of 1828, and will afford the means of extinguishing ten millions more of the principal of the public debt.

This new element of prosperity to that part of our agricultural industry which is occupied in producing the first article of human subsistence, is of the most cheering character to the feelings of patriotism. Proceeding from a cause which humanity will view with concern, the sufferings of scarcity in distant lands, it yields a consolatory reflection, that this scarcity is in no respect attributable to us. That it comes from the dispensation of Him who ordains all in wisdom and goodness, and who permits evil itself only as an instrument of good. That, far from contributing to this scarcity, our agency will be applied only to the alleviation of its severity; and that, in pouring forth, from the abundance of our own garners, the supplies which will partially restore plenty to those who are in need, we shall ourselves reduce our stores, and add to the price of our own bread, so as in some degree to participate in the wants which it will be the good fortune of our country to relieve.

The great interests of an agricultural, commercial, and manufacturing nation, are so linked in union together, that no permanent cause of prosperity to one of them can operate without extending its influence to the others. All these interests are alike under the protecting power of the legislative authority; and the duties of the representative bodies are to conciliate them in harmony together. So far as the object of taxation is to raise a revenue for discharging the debts and defraying the expenses of the community, its operation should be adapted, as much as possible, to suit the burden with equal hand upon all, in proportion with their ability of bearing it without oppression. But the legislation of one nation is sometimes intentionally made to bear heavily upon the interests of another. That legislation, adapted, as it is meant to be, to the special interests of its own people, will often press most unequally upon the several component interests of its neighbors. Thus, the legislation of Great Britain, when, as has recently been avowed, adapted to the depression of a rival nation, will naturally abound with regulations of interdict upon the productions of the soil or industry of the other, which come in competition with its own; and will present encouragement, perhaps even bounty, to the raw material of the other State, which it cannot produce itself, and which is essential for the use of its manufactures, competitors in the markets of the world with those of its commercial rival. Such is the state of the commercial legislation of Great Britain, as it bears upon our interests. It excludes, with interdicting duties, all importation (except in time of approaching famine) of the great staple productions of our Middle and Western States; it proscribes, with equal rigor, the bulkier lumber and live stock of the same

portion, and also of the Northern and Eastern part of our Union. It refuses even the rice of the South, unless aggravated with a charge of duty upon the Northern carrier who brings it to them. But the cotton, indispensable for their looms, they will receive almost duty free, to weave it into a fabric for our own wear, to the destruction of our own manufactures, which they are enabled thus to undersell. Is the self-protecting energy of this nation so helpless that there exists, in the political institutions of our country, no power to counteract the bias of this foreign legislation? that the growers of grain must submit to this exclusion from the foreign markets of their produce; that the shippers must dismantle their ships, the trade of the North stagnate at the wharves, and the manufacturers starve at their looms, while the whole People shall pay tribute to foreign industry, to be clad in a foreign garb; that the Congress of the Union are impotent to restore the balance in favor of native industry destroyed by the statutes of another realm? More just and more generous sentiments will, I trust, prevail. If the tariff adopted at the last session of Congress shall be found, by experience, to bear oppressively upon the interests of any one section of the Union, it ought to be, and I cannot doubt will be, so modified as to alleviate its burden. To the voice of just complaint from any portion of their constituents, the Representatives of the States and of the People will never turn away their ears. But, so long as the duty of the foreign shall operate only as a bounty upon the domestic article—while the planter, and the merchant, and the shepherd, and the husbandman, shall be found thriving in their occupations under the duties imposed for the protection of domestic manufactures, they will not repine at the prosperity shared with themselves by their fellow-citizens of other professions, nor denounce, as violations of the Constitution, the deliberate acts of Congress to shield from the wrongs of foreign laws the native industry of the Union. While the tariff of the last session of Congress was a subject of legislative deliberation, it was foretold by some of its opposers that one of its necessary consequences would be to impair the revenue. It is yet too soon to pronounce, with confidence, that this prediction was erroneous. The obstruction of one avenue of trade not unfrequently opens an issue to another. The consequence of the tariff will be to increase the exportation, and to diminish the importation of some specific articles. But, by the general law of trade, the increase of exportation of one article will be followed by an increased importation of others, the duties upon which will supply the deficiencies which the diminished importation would otherwise occasion. The effect of taxation upon revenue can seldom be foreseen with certainty. It must abide the test of experience. As yet, no symptoms of diminution are perceptible in the receipts of the Treasury. As yet, little addition of cost has even been experienced upon the articles burthened with heavier duties by the last tariff. The domestic manufacturer supplies the same or a kindred article at a diminished price, and the consumer pays the same tribute to the labor of his own countryman, which he must otherwise have paid to foreign industry and toil.

The tariff of the last session was, in its details, not acceptable to the great interests of any portion of the Union; not even to the interest which it was specially intended to subserve. Its object was to balance the burdens upon native industry imposed by the operation of foreign laws; but not to aggravate the burdens of one section of the Union by the relief af-

forded to another. To the great principle sanctioned by that act, one of those upon which the Constitution itself was formed, I hope and trust the authorities of the Union will adhere. But if any of the duties imposed by the act only relieve the manufacturer by aggravating the burden of the planter, let a careful revisal of its provisions, enlightened by the practical experience of its effects, be directed to retain those which impart protection to native industry, and remove or supply the place of those which only alleviate one great national interest by the depression of another.

The United States of America, and the People of every State of which they are composed, are each of them Sovereign Powers. The legislative authority of the whole is exercised by Congress, under authority granted them in the common Constitution. The legislative power of each State is exercised by assemblies deriving their authority from the Constitution of the State. Each is sovereign within its own province. The distribution of power between them presupposes that these authorities will move in harmony with each other. The members of the State and General Governments are all under oath to support both, and allegiance is due to the one and to the other. The case of a conflict between these two powers has not been supposed; nor has any provision been made for it in our institutions; as a virtuous Nation of ancient times existed more than five centuries without a law for the punishment of parricide.

More than once, however, in the progress of our history, have the People and the Legislatures of one or more States, in moments of excitement, been instigated to this conflict; and the means of effecting this impulse have been allegations that the acts of Congress to be resisted were *unconstitutional*. The People of no one State have ever delegated to their Legislature the power of pronouncing an act of Congress unconstitutional; but they have delegated to them powers, by the exercise of which the execution of the laws of Congress within the State may be resisted. If we suppose the case of such conflicting legislation sustained by the corresponding Executive and Judicial authorities, patriotism and philanthropy turn their eyes from the condition in which the parties would be placed, and from that of the people of both, which must be its victims.

The Reports from the Secretary of War, and the various subordinate offices of the resort of that Department, present an exposition of the public administration of affairs connected with them, through the course of the current year. The present state of the Army, and the distribution of the force of which it is composed, will be seen from the report of the Major General. Several alterations in the disposal of the troops have been found expedient in the course of the year; and the discipline of the Army, though not entirely free from exception, has been generally good.

The attention of Congress is particularly invited to that part of the report of the Secretary of War which concerns the existing system of our relations with the Indian tribes. At the establishment of the Federal Government, under the present Constitution of the United States, the principle was adopted of considering them as foreign and independent Powers, and also as proprietors of lands. They were, moreover, considered as savages, whom it was our policy and our duty to use our influence in converting to Christianity, and in bringing within the pale of civilization.

As independent Powers, we negotiated with them by treaties; as proprietors, we purchased of them all the lands which we could prevail upon

them to sell; as brethren of the human race, rude and ignorant, we endeavored to bring them to the knowledged of religion and of letters. The ultimate design was to incorporate in our own institutions that portion of them which could be converted to the state of civilization. In the practice of European States, before our Revolution, they had been considered *as children* to be governed; as tenants at discretion, to be dispossessed as occasion might require; as hunters, to be indemnified by trifling concessions for removal from the grounds from which their game was extirpated. In changing the system, it would seem as if a full contemplation of the consequences of the change had not been taken. We have been far more successful in the acquisition of their lands, than in imparting to them the principles, or inspiring them with the spirit of civilization. But in appropriating to ourselves their hunting grounds, we have brought upon ourselves the obligation of providing them with subsistence; and when we have had the rare good fortune of teaching them the arts of civilization and the doctrines of Christianity, we have unexpectedly found them forming, in the midst of ourselves, communities claiming to be independent of ours, and rivals of sovereignty within the territories of the members of our Union. This state of things requires that a remedy should be provided. A remedy, which, while it shall do justice to those unfortunate children of nature, may secure to the members of our Confederation their rights of sovereignty and of soil. As the outline of a project to that effect, the views presented in the Report of the Secretary of War are recommended to the consideration of Congress.

The Report from the Engineer Department presents a comprehensive view of the progress which has been made in the great systems promotive of the public interest, commenced and organized under the authority of Congress, and the effects of which have already contributed to the security, as they will hereafter largely contribute to the honor and dignity of the nation.

The first of these great systems is that of fortifications, commenced immediately after the close of our last war, under the salutary experience which the events of that war had impressed upon our countrymen of its necessity. Introduced under the auspices of my immediate predecessor, it has been continued with the persevering and liberal encouragement of the Legislature; and combined with corresponding exertions for the gradual increase and improvement of the Navy, prepares for our extensive country a condition of defence adapted to any critical emergency which the varying course of events may bring forth. Our advances in these concerted systems have for the last ten years been steady and progressive; and in a few years more will be so completed as to leave no cause for apprehension that our sea cost will ever again offer a theatre of hostile invasion.

The next of these cardinal measures of policy, is the preliminary to great and lasting works of public improvement, in the surveys of roads, examination for the course of canals, and labors for the removal of the obstructions of rivers and harbors, first commenced by the Act of Congress of 30th of April, 1824.

The report exhibits in one table the funds appropriated at the last and preceding sessions of Congress, for all these fortifications, surveys, and works of public improvement: the manner in which these funds have been applied; the amount expended upon the several works under construction, and the further sums which may be necessary to complete them.

In a second, the works projected by the Board of Engineers, which have not been commenced, and the estimate of their cost.

In a third, the report of the annual Board of Visiters at the Military Academy at West Point.

For thirteen fortifications, erecting on various points of our Atlantic from Rhode Island to Louisiana, the aggregate coast, expenditure of the year has fallen a little short of one million of dollars.

For the preparation of five additional reports of reconnoissances and surveys since the last session of Congress, for the civil constructions upon thirty-seven different public works commenced, eight others for which specific appropriations have been made by acts of Congress, and twenty other incipient surveys under the authority given by the act of 30th April, 1824, about one million more of dollars has been drawn from the Treasury.

To these two millions of dollars is to be added the appropriation of 250,000 dollars, to commence the erection of a Breakwater near the mouth of the Delaware river; the subscriptions to the Delaware and Chesapeake, the Louisville and Portland, the Dismal Swamp, and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canals; the large donations of lands to the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Alabama, for objects of improvements within those States, and the sums appropriated for Light Houses, Buoys, and Piers, on the coast; and a full view will be taken of the munificence of the Nation in the application of its resources to the improvement of its own condition.

Of these great national undertakings, the Academy at West Point is among the most important in itself, and the most comprehensive in its consequences. In that institution, a part of the revenue of the Nation is applied to defray the expense of educating a competent portion of her youth, chiefly to the knowledge and the duties of military life. It is the living armory of the Nation. While the other works of improvement enumerated in the reports now presented to the attention of Congress, are destined to ameliorate the face of nature; to multiply the facilities of communication between the different parts of the Union; to assist the labors, increase the comforts, and enhance the enjoyments of individuals; the instruction acquired at West Point enlarges the dominion and expands the capacities of the mind.

Its beneficial results are already experienced in the composition of the Army, and their influence is felt in the intellectual progress of society. The institution is susceptible still of great improvement from benefactions proposed by several successive Boards of Visiters, to whose earnest and repeated recommendations I cheerfully add my own.

With the usual annual reports from the Secretary of the Navy and the Board of Commissioners, will be exhibited to the view of Congress the execution of the laws relating to that department of the public service. The repression of piracy in the West Indian and in the Grecian seas has been effectually maintained, with scarcely any exception. During the war between the Governments of Buenos Ayres and of Brazil, frequent collisions between the belligerent acts of power and the rights of neutral commerce occurred. Licentious blockades, irregularly enlisted, or impressed seamen, and the property of honest commerce, seized with violence, and even plundered under legal pretences, are disorders never separable from the conflicts of war upon the ocean. With a portion of them, the correspondence of our commanders on the eastern aspect of the South American coast, and among the islands of Greece, discover how far we have been in-

volved. In these, the honor of our country and the rights of our citizens have been asserted and vindicated. The appearance of new squadrons in the Mediterranean, and the blockade of the Dardanelles, indicate the danger of other obstacles to the freedom of commerce, and the necessity of keeping our naval force in those seas. To the suggestions repeated in the report of the Secretary of the Navy, and tending to the permanent improvement of this institution, I invite the favorable consideration of Congress.

A resolution of the House of Representatives, requesting that one of our small public vessels should be sent to the Pacific Ocean and South Sea, to examine the coasts, islands, harbors, shoals, and reefs, in those seas, and to ascertain their true situation and description, has been put in a train of execution. The vessel is nearly ready to depart; the successful accomplishment of the expedition may be greatly facilitated by suitable legislative provisions; and particularly by an appropriation to defray its necessary expense. The addition of a second, and, perhaps, a third vessel, with a slight aggravation of the cost, would contribute much to the safety of the citizens embarked on this undertaking, the results of which may be of the deepest interest to our country.

With the report of the Secretary of the Navy, will be submitted, in conformity to the Act of Congress of third March, 1827, for the gradual improvement of the Navy of the United States, statements of the expenditures under that act, and of the measures taken for carrying the same into effect. Every section of that statute contains a distinct provision, looking to the great object of the whole, the gradual improvement of the Navy. Under its salutary sanction, stores of ship-timber have been procured, and are in process of seasoning and preservation for the future uses of the Navy. Arrangements have been made for the preservation of the live-oak timber growing on the lands of the United States, and for its reproduction, to supply, at future and distant days, the waste of that most valuable material for ship building, by the great consumption of it, yearly, for the commercial, as well as for the military marine of our country. The construction of the two Dry Docks at Charlestown and at Norfolk is making satisfactory progress towards a durable establishment. The examinations and inquiries to ascertain the practicability and expediency of a Marine Railway at Pensacola, though not yet accomplished, have been postponed, but to be more effectually made. The Navy Yards of the United States have been examined, and plans for their improvement, and the preservation of the public property therein, at Portsmouth, Charlestown, Philadelphia, Washington, and Gosport, and to which two others are to be added, have been prepared, and received my sanction; and no other portion of my public duties has been performed with a more intimate conviction of its importance to the future welfare and security of the Union.

With the report from the Postmaster General, is exhibited a comparative view of the gradual increase of that establishment, from five to five years, since 1792, till this time, in the number of Post Offices, which has grown from less than two hundred to nearly eight thousand; in the revenue yielded by them, which, from sixty-seven thousand dollars, has swollen to upwards of a million and a half, and in the number of miles of Post Roads, which, from five thousand six hundred and forty-two, have multiplied to one hundred and fourteen thousand five hundred and thirty six. While, in the same period of time, the population of the Union has about thrice doubled, the rate of increase of these offices is nearly forty,

and of the revenue, and of travelled miles, from twenty to twenty-five for one. The increase of revenue, within the last five years, has been nearly equal to the whole revenue of the Department in 1812.

The expenditures of the Department, during the year which ended on the first of July last, have exceeded the receipts by a sum of about twenty-five thousand dollars. The excess has been occasioned by the increase of mail conveyances and facilities, to the extent of near eight hundred thousand miles. It has been supplied by collections from the Postmasters of the arrearages of preceding years. While the correct principle seems to be, that the income levied by the Department should defray all its expenses, it has never been the policy of this Government to raise from this establishment any revenue to be applied to any other purposes. The suggestion of the Postmaster General, that the insurance of the safe transmission of moneys by the mail might be assumed by the Department, for a moderate and competent remuneration, will deserve the consideration of Congress.

A report from the Commissioner of the Public Buildings in this City exhibits the expenditures upon them in the course of the current year. It will be seen that the humane and benevolent intentions of Congress in providing, by the Act of 20th May, 1826, for the erection of a Penitentiary in this District, have been accomplished. The authority of further legislation is now required for the removal to this tenement of the offenders against the laws, sentenced to atone by personal confinement for their crimes, and to provide a code for their employment and government while thus confined.

The Commissioners appointed, conformably to the act of 2d March, 1827, to provide for the adjustment of claims of persons entitled to indemnification under the first article of the Treaty of Ghent, and for the distribution among such claimants of the sum paid by the Government of Great Britain under the Convention of 13th November, 1826, closed their labors on the 30th of August last, by awarding to the claimants the sum of one million one hundred and ninety-seven thousand four hundred and twenty-two dollars and eighteen cents; leaving a balance of seven thousand five hundred and thirty-seven dollars and eighty-two cents, which was distributed rateably amongst all the claimants to whom awards had been made, according to the directions of the act.

The exhibits appended to the report from the Commissioner of the General Land Office, present the actual condition of that common property of the Union. The amount paid into the Treasury from the proceeds of lands, during the year 1827, and the first half of 1828, falls little short of two millions of dollars. The propriety of further extending the time for the extinguishment of the debt due to the United States by the purchasers of the public lands, limited, by the act of 21st March last, to the fourth of July next, will claim the consideration of Congress, to whose vigilance and careful attention, the regulation, disposal, and preservation of this great national inheritance has, by the People of the United States, been entrusted.

Among the important subjects to which the attention of the present Congress has already been invited, and which may occupy their further and deliberate discussion, will be the provision to be made for taking the fifth census or enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States. The Constitution of the United States requires that this enumeration should be

made within every term of ten years, and the date from which the last enumeration commenced was the first Monday of August of the year 1820. The laws under which the former enumerations were taken were enacted at the Session of Congress immediately preceding the operation. But considerable inconveniencies were experienced from the delay of legislation to so late a period. That law, like those of the preceding enumerations, directed that the census should be taken by the Marshals of the several districts and Territories of the Union, under instructions from the Secretary of State. The preparation and transmission to the Marshals of those instructions, required more time than was then allowed between the passage of the law and the day when the enumeration was to commence. The term of six months, limited for the returns of the Marshals, was also found even then too short; and must be more so now, when an additional population of at least three millions must be presented upon the returns. As they are to be made at the short session of Congress, it would, as well as from other considerations, be more convenient to commence the enumeration from an earlier period of the year than the first of August. The most favorable season would be the Spring. On a review of the former enumerations, it will be found that the plan for taking every census has contained many improvements upon that of its predecessor. The last is still susceptible of much improvement. The third census was the first at which any account was taken of the manufactures of the country. It was repeated at the last enumeration, but the returns in both cases were necessarily very imperfect. They must always be so, resting of course only upon the communications voluntarily made by individuals interested in some of the manufacturing establishments. Yet they contained much valuable information, and may, by some supplementary provision of the law, be rendered more effective. The columns of age, commencing from infancy, have hitherto been confined to a few periods, all under the number of 45 years. Important knowledge would be obtained by extending these columns, in intervals of ten years, to the utmost boundaries of human life. The labor of taking them would be a trifling addition to that already prescribed; and the result would exhibit comparative tables of longevity highly interesting to the country. I deem it my duty further to observe, that much of the imperfections in the returns of the last, and perhaps of preceding enumerations proceeded from the inadequateness of the compensations allowed to the Marshals and their assistants in taking them.

In closing this communication, it only remains for me to assure the Legislature of my continued earnest wish for the adoption of measures recommended by me heretofore, and yet to be acted on by them; and of the cordial concurrence on my part in every constitutional provision which may receive their sanction during the Session, tending to the general welfare.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS.

WASHINGTON, *December* 2, 1828.

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